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extremely good tempered and quiet in his disposition unless when irritated or excited, when he becomes furious, and is, in consequence of his tremendous strength, a truly formidable animal. The size of these dogs has been much exaggerated. Goldsmith asserts that he saw several, some of which were four feet high! We cannot of course credit this, but there is no doubt that they were larger than most other dogs, and indeed the Highland deer-hound is now the tallest dog in existence.

This animal is nearly extinct. Even Glengarry, whose dogs were once so famous, has not one genuine specimen left, and but a few remain scattered here and there through the north of Ireland and the Highlands of Scotland. Mr Nolan's dog "Oscar," whose portrait heads this article, is the finest specimen of the kind I have ever seen, standing 28½ inches in height at the shoulders; their average height in their very best days seems to have been about 30 inches. The colour of these dogs varies, but the most esteemed are dark iron-grey, with white breast. This is the colour of Oscar. They are, however, to be found of a yellowish or sandy hue, brindled, and even white. In former times, as will be seen from Lord Falkland's letter quoted above, this latter colour was by many preferred. One of the most remarkable facts respecting the size of this dog, is the great disparity which exists between the sizes of the male and female of the breed, many of the latter being very diminutive, while their male offspring invariably attain the full stature of its race. Why will not some of our Irish gentlemen and sportsmen turn their attention to this splendid breed of dogs, and seek to prevent, ere it be too late, its total extirpation?

Now, readers, there may be some among you who have thought my paper somewhat dry and prosy; and in case you should forget the many times I have amused you before, and cast me forth altogether from your good graces, I shall conclude with an authentic statement of how the last wolves existing in the county Tyrone were destroyed by means of the Irish greyhound; my account is taken from a biography of a Tyrone family published in Belfast in 1829. I thus venture to abridge the note to page 74.

In the mountainous parts of the county Tyrone the inhabitants suffered much from the wolves, and gave from the public fund as much for the head of one of these animals as they would now give for the capture of a notorious robber on the highway. There lived in those days an adventurer, who, alone and unassisted, made it his occupation to destroy these ravagers. The time for attacking them was in the night, and midnight was the best time for doing so, as that was their wonted time for leaving their lair in search of food, when the country was at rest and all was still; then issuing forth, they fell on their defenceless prey, and the carnage commenced. There was a species of dog for the purpose of hunting them, called the wolf-dog; the animal resembled a rough, stout, half-bred greyhound, but was much stronger. In the county Tyrone there was then a large space of ground inclosed by a high stone wall, having a gap at each of the two opposite extremities, and in this were secured the flocks of the surrounding farmers. Still, secure though this fold was deemed, it was entered by the wolves, and its inmates slaughtered. The neighbouring proprietors having heard of the noted wolf-hunter above mentioned, by name Rory Carragh, sent for him, and offered the usual reward, with some addition, if he would undertake to destroy the two remaining wolves that had committed such devastation. Carragh undertaking the task, took with him two wolf-dogs, and a little boy only twelve years old, the only person who would accompany him, and repaired at the approach of midnight to the fold in question. "Now," said Carragh to the boy, "as the two wolves usually enter the opposite extremities of the sheep-fold at the same time, I must leave you and one of the dogs to guard this one while I go to the other. He steals with all the caution of a cat, nor will you hear him, but the dog will, and positively will give him the first fall; if, therefore, you are not active when he is down to rivet his neck to the ground with this spear, he will rise up and kill both you and the dog. So good night."

"I'll do what I can," said the little boy, as he took the spear from the wolf-hunter's hand.

The boy immediately threw open the gate of the fold, and took his seat in the inner part, close to the entrance; his faithful companion crouching at his side, and seeming perfectly aware of the dangerous business he was engaged in. The night was very dark and cold, and the poor little boy being

benumbed with the chilly air, was beginning to fall into a kind of sleep, when at that instant the dog with a roar leaped across him, and laid his mortal enemy upon the earth. The boy was roused into double activity by the voice of his companion, and drove the spear through the wolf's neck as he had been directed, at which time Carragh appeared, bearing the head of the other.

I have not been able to ascertain with certainty the date of the death of the last Irish wolf, but there was a presentment for killing wolves granted in Cork in the year 1710. I am at present acquainted with an old gentleman between 80 and 90 years of age, whose mother remembered wolves to have been killed in the county of Wexford about the year 1730-40; and it is asserted by many persons of weight and veracity that a wolf was killed in the Wicklow mountains so recently as 1770. I have other legends on the subject of wolf-hunting in Ireland in former times, but want of space compels me, for the present at all events, to conclude, which I do, trusting that what I have already written will gratify my readers.

An ancient Irish harp, popularly known as the harp of Brian Boriumha, still preserved in Trinity College, Dublin, is ornamented with a figure of the wolf-dog, which, as representing him under the form of a rough strong greyhound, precisely similar to the animal now known as the Highland deer-hound, furnishes an additional argument to the correctness of the position above advanced. H. D. R.

MOSAIC WORK.—The art of mosaic work has been known in Rome since the days of the republic. The severer rulers of that period forbade the introduction of foreign marbles, and the republican mosaics are all in black and white. Under the empire the art was greatly improved, and not merely by the introduction of marbles of various colours, but by the invention of artificial stones, termed by the Italians *smalti*, which can be made of every variety of tint. This art was never entirely lost. On the introduction of pictures into Christian temples, they were first made of mosaic; remaining specimens of these are rude, but profoundly interesting in a historical point of view. When art was restored in Italy, mosaic also was improved, but it attained its greatest perfection in the last and present century. Roman mosaic, as now practised, may be described as being the production of pictures by connecting together numerous minute pieces of coloured marble or artificial stones; these are attached to a ground of copper by means of a strong cement of gum mastic, and other materials, and are afterwards ground and polished as a stone would be to a perfectly level surface; by this art not only are ornaments made on a small scale, but pictures of the largest size are copied. In former times the largest cupolas of churches, and not unfrequently the entire walls, were encrusted with mosaic. The most remarkable modern works are the copies which have been executed of some of the most important works of the great masters for the altars in St Peter's. These are in every respect perfect imitations of the originals; and when the originals, in spite of every care, must change and perish, these mosaics will still convey to distant ages a perfect idea of the triumphs of art achieved in the fifteenth century. The government manufactory in Rome occupies the apartments in the Vatican which were used as offices of the Inquisition. No copies are now made, but cases of *smalti* are shown, containing, it is said, 18,000 different tints. Twenty years were employed in making one of the copies I have mentioned. The pieces of mosaic vary in size from an eighth to a sixteenth of an inch, and eleven men were employed for that time on each picture. A great improvement was introduced into the art in 1775 by the Signor Raffaelli, who thought of preparing the *smalti* in what may be termed fine threads. The pastes or *smalti* are manufactured at Venice in the shape of crayons, or like sticks of sealing-wax, and are afterwards drawn out by the workman at a blow-pipe, into the thickness he requires, often almost to a hair, and now seldom thicker than the finest grass stalk. For tables and large articles, of course, the pieces are thicker; but the beauty of the workmanship, the soft gradation of the tints, and the cost, depend upon the minuteness of the pieces, and the skill displayed by the artist. A ruin, a group of flowers or figures, will employ a good artist about two months when only two inches square, and a specimen of such a description costs from £5 to £20., according to the execution; a landscape, six inches by four, would require eighteen months, and would cost from forty to fifty pounds. This will strike you as no adequate remuneration.

ration for the time bestowed. The finest ornaments for a lady, consisting of necklace, ear-rings, and brooch, cost forty pounds. For a picture of Paestum, eight feet long, and twenty inches broad, on which four men were occupied for three years, £1,000 sterling was asked.

I shall now notice the mosaic work of Florence. It differs entirely from Roman mosaic, being composed of stones inserted in comparatively large masses; it is called work in *pietra dura*. The stones used are all more or less of a rare and precious nature. In old specimens the most beautiful works are those in which the designs are of an arabesque character. The most remarkable specimen of this description of *pietra dura* is an octagonal table in the *Gabinetto di Baroccio*, in the Florence Gallery. It is valued at £20,000 sterling, and was commenced in 1623 by Jacopo Detelli, from designs by Ligozzi. Twenty-two artists worked upon it without interruption till it was terminated in the year 1649. Attempts at landscapes, and the imitation of natural objects, were usually failures in former times, mere works of labour, which did not attain their object; but of late works have been produced in this art, in which are represented groups of flowers and fruit, vases, musical instruments, and other compatible objects, with a truth and beauty which excite the utmost admiration and surprise. These pictures in stone are, however, enormously expensive, and can only be seen in the palaces of the great. Two tables in the Palazzo Pitti are valued at £7,000, and this price is by no means excessive. These are of modern design, on a ground of porphyry, and ten men were employed for four years on one of them, and a spot is pointed out, not more than three inches square, on which a man had worked for ten months. But Florentine mosaic, like that of Rome, is not merely used for cabinets, tables, or other ornamental articles; the walls of the spacious chapel which is used as the burial-place of the reigning family at Florence are lined with *pietra dura*, realising the gem-encrusted halls of the Arabian tales. Roman mosaic, as we have seen, is of great value as an ally to art; but Florentine mosaic can have no such pretensions, and time and money might be better bestowed. The effect is far from pleasing in the chapel I have alluded to, and I think that the art might be advantageously confined to the production of small ornaments, for which it is eminently adapted.—*The Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal*.

SEALS OF IRISH CHIEFS.

An Essay read at a Meeting of the Royal Irish Academy,
by George Petrie, R.H.A., M.R.I.A.

HAVING a few months since succeeded in deciphering an ancient and somewhat difficult inscription on the seal of a distinguished Irish chief, which the Dean of St Patrick's had but just previously added to his magnificent collection of our national antiquities, it occurred to me that a notice of this seal, and of a few others of the same class, preserved in that collection and in my own, might be somewhat interesting to the Academy, and at the same time prove useful in showing the importance of forming collections of this kind. In an assembly so enlightened as that which I have the honour to address, it would be impertinent to offer any remarks on the value of ancient seals, not only as evidences of the truth of history, both local and national, but also as illustrations of the state and progress of the arts in times past. As has been justly remarked, it is from the great seals of England that we have been supplied with the surest criteria for estimating the progressive advancements made in architectural taste, and the various successive phases which it has from time to time exhibited in the country; and if all other historical evidences were lost, this alone would perhaps be sufficient to compensate for the want. The importance of this branch of archaeology has indeed been felt and acknowledged in every other country of Europe, in proportion to the progress which it has made in civilization and refinement; and we should perhaps feel some mortification at being necessitated to confess that in Ireland alone it has hitherto received scarcely any attention. I shall not say that this neglect on the part of our antiquaries has arisen from a distaste for investigations which, as they require merely a little learning and common sense, allow no indulgence for the mind to soar into the dim and distant upper regions of romance and fanciful conjecture, where such qualities would be found but weighty and earthly incumbrances. A sufficient reason may be found in the fact, that until very recently there were no collections of antiquities of this

class in existence to which investigators could refer; and hence, if the Irish antiquary had been only a few years back asked the question whether the Irish ever had the use of signets commonly among them, he would have been constrained to confess his inability to give an answer. Such a question, however, can be replied to now in a more satisfactory manner. It is ascertained that not only the Irish kings and petty princes, from the period of the Anglo-Norman conquest, used signets, but also that they were common among persons of inferior rank. It can be also shown that such signets closely resembled in style and device those of the Anglo-Normans of similar ranks. Still, however, from the imperfection consequent on the recent formation of our collections of antiquities, the era at which seals began to be used in Ireland remains undecided; for although we have no seals of an earlier age than the thirteenth century, it would be as yet premature to conclude that none such ever existed. Till a recent period it was the opinion of the English antiquaries generally that the use of signets was unknown to the Saxons, and was introduced into England by the Normans; and this opinion was grounded on the fact that no Saxon seals had ever been discovered. But of late years there have been found seals, unquestionably of the Saxon times; and no doubt can now be reasonably entertained of their general use among that people; and hence, although no seals of coteremporaneous with the Saxon times have as yet been met with in Ireland, the similarity that prevailed between the two countries in customs, and in knowledge of the arts, would very strongly warrant the conclusion that the use of signets could not have been unknown or perhaps uncommon in Ireland.

To these prefatory remarks I have only to add, that though the use of signets was common not only among the Greeks and Romans, but also among the earlier civilized nations of the East, we have no evidence that such a use had ever been introduced into Ireland by its original colonists.

With these few general introductory observations I shall now proceed to exhibit to the Academy the seals which it appeared to me desirable to bring under their notice.



The first, unfortunately, I can only exhibit in a drawing, as the original is not now known to exist. It is the seal of Felim O'Conor, who was allowed by the English government to bear the hereditary title of king of Connaught in the thirteenth century, and the legend is *S. Fedlimid Regis Conactie*. The impression of this seal has been published in Ware's *Antiquities*, where it is adduced as an evidence that some of the Irish chiefs retained the title of king subsequently to the Anglo-Norman conquest. The following is the passage in which the statement occurs:—

"Thus far the kings of Ireland, who lived before the arrival of the English under King Henry II, but even after that period, some, though subjects, enjoyed the regal title, and were styled kings even by the kings of England. For Hoveden cites the following passage under the year 1175. *Hic est Finis et Concordia*, &c. 'This is the final end and concord, which was made at Windsor on the octaves of St Michael in the year of grace 1175, between our Lord Henry king of England, son of the Empress Maude, and Roderick king of Connaught, by Catholiceus, Archbishop of Tuam, and Cantord, Abbot of St Brendan, and Master Laurence, chancellor of the king of Conaught, viz., that the king of England grants to the said Roderick, his liege man, king of Conaught, that as long as he shall faithfully serve him, he shall be king under him, ready to do him service as liege man, &c.' The letters patent of king Henry II., by which he committed the management of his Irish affairs to William Fitz-Adelm, his sewer, shew us the rank in which these nominal kings were at that time placed. They begin thus: '*Henricus*, &c. Henry by the grace of God, king of England, lord of Ireland, duke of Normandy and Aquitain, and earl of Anjou, to the arch-